



TESTIMONY OF
MARTHA TOWNSEND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In Opposition to
Bill 69 Relating to Public Transit

Budget Committee
Honolulu City Council
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The Outdoor Circle strongly opposes Bill 69 because the sale of bus billboards would open the floodgates to unwanted mobile advertising in Hawai'i. Our members support improved bus service for Honolulu's residents and visitors, but it is not necessary to risk Hawai'i's scenic beauty and enviable sign laws to achieve it.

Mayor Caldwell's proposed amendments to his bill highlight fundamental problems with his proposal:

How will the bus advertising program be administered in Department of Budget and Finance Services?

How much will it cost this Department to administer the program?

Who will decide which advertisements are acceptable and which are not?

How much will the City pay in litigation over rejected advertisements? (Advocacy groups are ready to "pounce" at the opportunity to advertise their political opinions in Honolulu)

How will the City control other "advances" in bus advertising, such as digital, lighted, and audible advertising? (It is not just bus wraps that are offensive)

How will the City protect against the risks of distracted driving?

If bus ads do not attract people's attention, then will they yield enough income to meet the City's projected revenue goals?

If the bus advertising program does not meet projected revenue goals, then will the City reduce limitations on the program (e.g. allow "bus wraps") or cut bus services?

To what extent will the bus advertising program increase other illegal vehicular advertising?

What resources will be available to the Honolulu Police Department to enforce against the increase in illegal advertising on other vehicles?

Mayor Caldwell's bill violates the spirit and intent of Hawai'i's mobile advertising ban (Haw. Rev. Stat. § 445-12.5) and Honolulu's vehicular sign ordinance (ROH §41-14), both of which prohibit the sale of advertising on vehicles, while still allowing businesses to identify the vehicles used in the course of their commercial activity.

Even with regulations on the books to prohibit third party advertising, other jurisdictions, like Maine, that have billboard bans and external bus advertising have experienced a dramatic increase in illegal vehicular advertising. Unlike Hawai'i, however, Maine has a division of its state department of transportation that enforces its vehicular advertising regulations.

Mayor Caldwell's bill raises more questions than it answers, creates more problems than it solves. **At the very least, Bill 69 should be deferred until more information can be gathered on this proposal.** The few million dollars that Bill 69 might bring in is not worth the unintended consequences, not the least of which is the risk to our scenic viewplanes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.